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ABSTRACT

This evaluation study examined changes in school readiness among 35 children who participated during the 2002-2003 fiscal year in two programs: (1) Project Family Read, an educational and parent education program operating during the school year for families of children not enrolled in regulated child care in Granville County, North Carolina; and (2) Kinder Camp, a more focused summer readiness program for children from Project Family Read who entered kindergarten in August. Both programs are supported through Smart Start funds. The measure of school readiness was the Cognitive/Language Profile of the Early Screening Profiles. Pretests were given soon after children's entry into Project Family Read, and posttests were given during the final week of Kinder Camp. Children's scores were converted into age equivalents (AE) for comparison with the children's chronological ages (CA). Results indicated that the average pretest AE was approximately 55 months, almost equivalent to the average CA at the time. The average posttest AE was approximately 70 months, in comparison to the average CA of about 63 months. Every child made a gain in AE score on the Cognitive/Language Profile. The results were consistent with those obtained in two previous years in which the average gain in AE scores was approximately double the change in CA between the children's entrance to Project Family Read and the end of Kinder Camp. The findings reinforce the conclusion that Project Family Read and Kinder Camp are effective in improving the readiness of children for kindergarten. (KB)

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The Impact of Participation in Project Family Read and Kinder Camp On Children's Readiness for School 2002-2003

A Project of
Granville County Schools
and
Franklin-Granville-Vance Partnership for Children

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A Smart START Project

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September 2003

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The Impact of Participation in
Project Family Read and Kinder Camp
On Children's Readiness for School
2002-2003

Project Family Read provides an educational program during the school year for families of children who are not enrolled in regulated child care. The children participate in age-appropriate learning activities and the adults in parenting instruction. Kinder Camp provides a more focused readiness program in the summer for children from Project Family Read who will be entering kindergarten in August. Both programs are operated by Granville County Schools and are supported with Smart Start funds provided by the Franklin-Granville-Vance Partnership for Children.

During the 2002-2003 fiscal year, 35 children participated in both Project Family Read and Kinder Camp. Thirteen were enrolled at West Oxford Elementary School and 22 at Stovall-Shaw Elementary School.

This report describes changes that took place in school readiness between the time the children enrolled in Project Family Read and the end of Kinder Camp.

The Measure of School Readiness

The *Cognitive/Language Profile* of the American Guidance Service Early Screening Profiles was used to measure the children's understanding of verbal concepts, reasoning ability, and mastery of basic school skills. These are areas that are important for success in school. Validity studies have shown the test to have moderate to high relationships with tests administered in the primary grades and with teachers' ratings of social skills and development, indicating that it is a good predictor of later academic performance.

Evaluation Design

The children were pre-tested using the *Cognitive/Language Profile* soon after they entered Project Family Read. They were post-tested during the final week of Kinder Camp. The differences between pre-test scores and post-test scores show the growth of the children in cognitive and language development during that period.

Because no control group was available, it was not possible to compare children in the program with similar children not in the program. That would have provided a more direct evaluation of the effects of the two programs. For that reason, another strategy had to be employed. This was done by converting the children's scores on the *Cognitive/Language Profile* into Age Equivalents (AE) and comparing these scores with the actual (chronological) ages.

An Age Equivalent score is the average score obtained by children of a given age on the *Cognitive/Language Profile*. For example, an AE score of 60 months is the

average score made by 5-year-old (that is, 60-month-old) children on the test when it was standardized. If a child who is 5 years old makes an AE score of 72 months, that indicates that the child is functioning about the way the average 6-year-old child functions in terms of cognitive and language development. In other words, she is somewhat advanced for her age in that area of development.

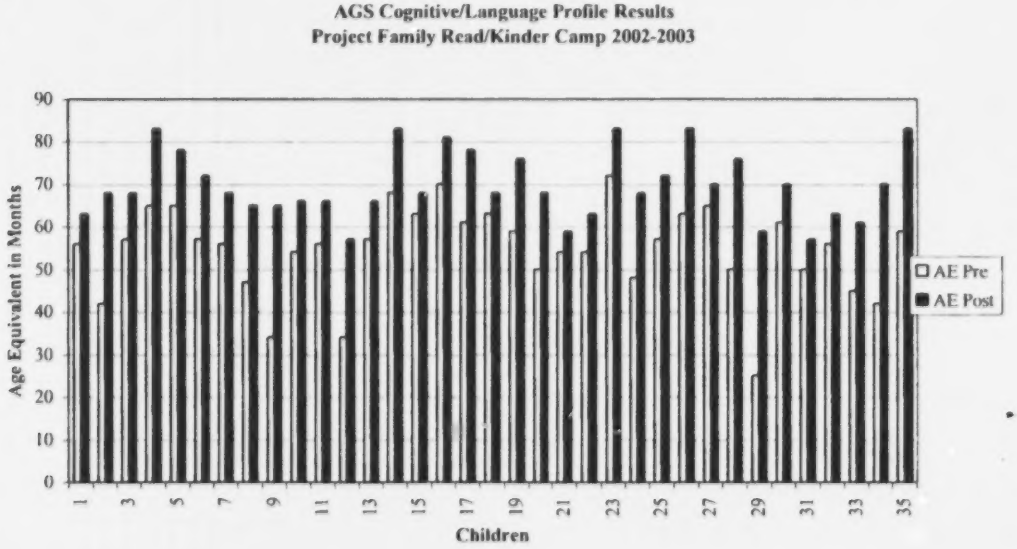
Results

The average AE score of the children when they were pre-tested near the beginning of Project Family Read was approximately 55 months, almost the same as the average chronological age of the children at that time. When the children were tested at the end of Kinder Camp, the average AE score had increased to approximately 70, while the average chronological age had increased to about 63 months. The results are summarized in the following table.

AGS Cognitive/Language Profile Results			
	Pre-Test	**Post-Test**	**Gain**
Average Chronological Age	55 months	63 months	8 months
Average Age Equivalent (AE) Score	55 months	70 months	15 months

As the table indicates, the average AE score increased by 15 months between pre- and post-testing. If the children had not participated in the programs, their average AE could have been anticipated to increase the same amount as their average chronological age of 8 months. It appears that participating in Project Family Read and Kinder Camp helped them make almost twice the gain they would have made without the programs.

Every child made a gain in AE score on the *Cognitive/Language Profile*. Results for individual children are presented in the following graph.



Each pair of bars represents pre- and post-test results for a child. The light bar on the left represents the pre-test score, while the dark bar on the right represents the post-test score. The smallest gain in AE, made by two children, was 5 months. The largest gain was 34 months.

Conclusion

Results described here are consistent with those obtained in the two previous years. In each case, the average gain in Age Equivalent scores on the American Guidance Service *Cognitive/Language Profile* was approximately double the change in chronological age between the children's entrance to Project Family Read and the end of Kinder Camp. These findings reinforce the conclusion that Project Family Read and Kinder Camp are effective in improving the readiness of children for kindergarten.

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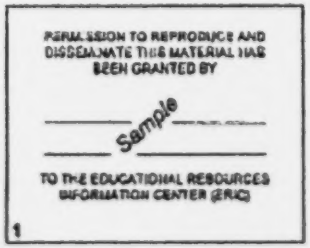
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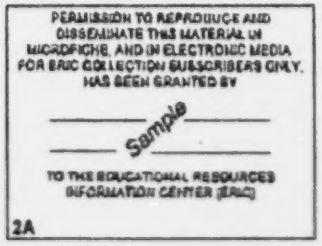
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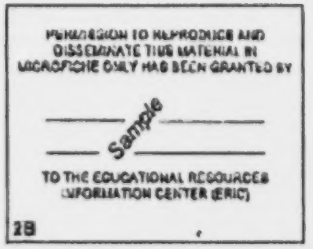
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